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Statement by SEIU 721 President Bob Schoonover on Passing of Riverside County Supervisor John J. Benoit

“SEIU Local 721 is very saddened to learn of the passing of Riverside County Supervisor John J. Benoit, who died on Dec. 26 at the age of 64 due to pancreatic cancer. He was a life-long Republican who understood that working hand-in-hand with unions critical to maintaining a strong public sector workforce and to supporting the very public services that union members provide.

“Benoit was first elected to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors in 2009, serving as chairman since 2013. Previously, he had served in the California State Assembly from 2002 to 2008 and in the California State Senate in 2009 – a position he relinquished to serve on the Riverside County Board of Supervisors.

“Though he will be remembered as a man of local power and influence, Benoit came from modest beginnings and was proud to be a self-made man. Originally born in Illinois, Benoit eventually graduated from Notre Dame High School in Riverside and worked for 31 years in law enforcement at the California Highway Patrol. During this time, he earned three degrees at night – an A.A. degree at Riverside Community College in 1974, a B.S. degree from California State University, Los Angeles in 1978; and a Master of Public Administration from California State University, San Bernardino in 1993. Benoit told *The Desert Sun* many years later: “I wasn’t privileged enough to attend a four-year college on somebody’s dime. I had to make it all on my own.”

“Benoit is survived by his wife, Sheryl; his son, Ben, and Ben’s wife Jaimie; his daughter, Sarah; his brothers, Mark and Paul; and his grandchildren, Abrielle and Nick. We extend them our deepest sympathies and heartfelt condolences during this difficult time. Benoit was a good man and will be missed by the members of SEIU Local 721.”

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